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LEGISLATURE MAY GET THE MEMBERS

Proposal to Deprive Private Members of Their Usual Rights in House.

CAN STOP SPEAKERS

When the Speaker Feels Like It—Liberals Will Fight New Move.

Toronto, Ont., April 12.—There will be a big fight in the Legislature if the Government persists in its proposal to deprive private members of the Assembly of the privileges they enjoy under the existing rules, orders and forms of procedure. This became evident yesterday afternoon when the revised rules of the House as reported by a select committee came up for consideration. The Opposition leader, Mr. N. W. Rowell, K. C., pointed out that the Government was proposing radical changes which would seriously curtail the privileges of private members of the Legislature.

One of the proposed new rules to which the Liberal leader offered strong objection is contained in clause 26, and reads as follows:

"A motion for reading the orders of the day shall have preference of any motion before the House, and a motion to change the order of business shall be decided without amendment or debate."

Mr. Rowell called particular attention to the words "without amendment or debate," and showed that if this rule were adopted the Government would be able to curtail the rights of private members' business and that member would have the right to say one word, "Without amendment and without debate a motion might be made," said Mr. Rowell.

Mr. Rowell estimated that the position would fight the proposed change to the last ditch.

It was learned that Mr. Rowell had already fought the proposal when it was made to the select committee appointed to revise the rules of the House, which was composed of the following members: Hon. Mr. Jamieson (the Speaker), Hon. Mr. McCreary, Hon. J. B. Lucas, Hon. F. W. McGarry, Mr. A. H. Macgregor (Huron), Mr. McCreary (Bedford), Mr. Sinclair (South Oxford), Mr. Rowell (North Oxford), Mr. Wm. Fox (Huron), Mr. H. H. H. (Huron) and Mr. J. Elliott (West Middlesex).

AIMED AT LABOR MEMBER.
Another proposed change which practically means closure is in the following terms:

"The Speaker or the Chairman, after having called the attention of the House or of the committee to the conduct of a member who persists in irrelevance, or tedious repetition either in his own arguments or in the arguments used by other members in debate, may direct him to discontinue his speech."

A third clause, which threatens to curtail the privilege of private members' standing on the members' day, is also proposed. At all events, many of the Government orders, shall be taken up according to the precedent assigned to each on the order paper.

Whatever Government orders may be called in such sequence as the Government may think proper, the Premier has apparently recognized the force of the Opposition leader's arguments. At all events, the Government has agreed to defer action on the contentious clauses of the proposed new rules.

Mr. J. B. Lucas, Attorney-General, who seemed to be in charge on the Government side, remarked that none of the members had paid much attention to the rules in the past. The Government had endeavored to meet the convenience of the members. Many of the members went away on Friday and did not come back until Monday, and the Government had to arrange their absence. Private members would be horrified shocked, said Mr. Lucas. If they came on Monday afternoon and found that their orders had been disposed of, if they adhered to their position, they might get cankerous and say they were not going on with their orders.

until John Jones, who was ahead of them, cleared up his business. The whole House would be at the mercy of one single member. The Attorney-General added that so long as the present rules were in force, they would not take advantage of private members. They had not one single member who would take advantage of them.

"Then why do we need these new rules? We have got along without them for almost half a century," commented the Liberal Whip.

Mr. Lucas replied that "now, when the Government is in the proper time to prepare for stormy days that may be ahead."

Mr. J. B. Lucas has been able to do the work of this Legislature for nearly half a century, and if the House of Commons has been able to do so long for that length of time without this power, I submit," said Mr. Rowell, "that my honorable friend (the Attorney-General) has a very weak argument in suggesting that we need to make a change which would undoubtedly take away from a private member the right to have his business dealt with."

THE VICTORIA DREDGING CASE

Dispute as to the Yards of Rock Taken Out.

Charges of Graft in Connection With the Work.

Ottawa, April 12.—The Public Accounts Committee probed again today the Victoria Harbor dredging scandal, which has been the subject of charges of sub-contractor McDonald's Secretary, C. E. Mallory, would have meant a graft of \$150,000 had the over-classification and padding of accounts not been brought through him to the attention of the Public Works Department and an investigation ordered.

Up to the end of October the total amount of rock allowed by the engineers for which payment was claimed by the contractor was a little more than 20,000 cubic yards.

The report of Mr. A. St. Laurent, Assistant Deputy Minister of Public Works, who investigated conditions last November, was to the effect that not more than 13,000 yards of rock at most had been taken out and should be paid for. The price allowed for rock excavation is \$9.10 per cubic yard. The Auditor-General in holding up payment to the contractor, and proceedings are now pending in the Exchequer Court to determine the actual amount due the contractor.

It will be remembered that in the evidence given by Mr. Mallory to the select sub-committee McDonald was in collusion with Superintendent of Dredging J. L. Nelson and Resident Department Engineer MacLachlan, with a view to increasing the amount of rock excavated and thereby obtaining a larger profit.

McDonald sub-let the blasting work for the rock excavation to a firm which collected from MacDonald a million dollar contract in Vancouver Harbor. They were to get \$4 per cubic yard for rock blasted. This firm is also interested in the Exchequer Court case now pending, since, if the amount of rock excavated is reduced, according to Mr. St. Laurent's estimate they will not be able to collect from sub-contractor McDonald.

The other side of the committee is now to find out which is right—the estimate of sub-contractor McDonald, supported by Engineer MacLachlan, that the full amount of 20,000 cubic yards had actually been taken out, or the claim of the department that only 13,000 cubic yards had been taken out. This was the point at issue in the continued cross-examination of Mr. McDonald's manager and working partner of Henry McKee & McDonald's drill plant worked by sub-contractor McDonald.

ACCOUNT BOOKS GONE TO U. S. In his evidence of Monday night

last Woolley claimed that the actual amount of rock drilled was as represented in the returns made to the department by the sub-contractor. To Mr. Carvell, however, this was a somewhat technical cross-examination, with a view to showing that the returns should be taken as Mr. St. Laurent's report rather than on the figures given by the sub-contractor. Woolley, who proved to be a somewhat reluctant witness at first, but who answered more freely after being somewhat warmly urged by Mr. Carvell, admitted after a good deal of questioning that the total number of men employed in the drilling plant was 52. Wages aggregated about \$200 per day for a total of 104 working days. Wages and his account books could not be produced, as they had gone to the United States, commented Mr. Carvell.

Finally, after much questioning, Mr. Carvell got the witness to admit that even at his maximum figures of expense the total cost of the operations of the drilling plant could not have been more than \$75,000. At \$4 per cubic yard for rock drilled the company was claiming \$150,000 for five months' work. Profits, therefore, if the Government allowed the account would be about \$25,000.

VANCOUVER SIMILAR SCANDAL? Woolley claimed that there had been no deal whatever with Engineer MacLachlan, witness of the Public Works Department, to boost the estimates of the firm which had a million-dollar contract for dredging the harbor, on which it was now working. Mr. Carvell told the witness that this Vancouver harbor contract would also come before them a little later on for a searching examination. It looks as if there might have been repetition in Vancouver of something of the same kind as in Victoria. Mr. Carvell said that although the original estimates at Vancouver were for only 10,000 cubic yards of rock, more than 20,000, or almost double that amount, had already been returned as excavated, and payment on that amount asked for the Government.

The committee sat until after 11 o'clock tonight, going over engineering details of Mr. Woolley's progress reports. It was developed that whereas the average number of feet tried by the drilling plant per hour during the four months of June, July, August and September were eight, the average for August ran up to over fourteen feet, and was during the month of the big jump in rock excavation took place which induced Mallory to make his final protest, which raised the suspicions of the Auditor-General, and which caused the departmental investigation.

ST. LAURENT STICKS TO REPORT. Assistant Deputy Minister St. Laurent, re-examined by Mr. A. R. Pringle, counsel for the contractor, stuck to the correctness of his report showing that there had been an over-classification of rock to the extent of about 15,000 cubic yards.

Mr. St. Laurent said that he stood aside by the part of his report to the department in which he said he did not think there had been any collusion or attempt to steal \$150,000. There had, however, been "an error of judgment."

To Mr. Carvell the witness said that when he visited Victoria he made a lot of the material classified as rock by the dredge. The dredge removed the material without undue strain. Several tests were made, all of the same character, and the results in all the areas in which these tests were made Mr. MacLachlan had made correct.

The committee will continue the investigation to-morrow.

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PUBLIC WORKS ESTIMATES ARE EXTRA VAGANT

Liberal Motion to Reduce Their List—Rogers Refuses to Cut Down.

PUGSLEY AND GRAHAM

Plead for Safety First—Want \$260,000 Struck Off the List.

Ottawa, April 12.—The Commons spent the greater part of today in supply on the Public Works estimates, with the Opposition endeavoring to restrain the spending. Pugsley, Minister of Public Works and suggesting real war economies in domestic expenditures rather than new methods of taxation to cope with the vastly increased outlays under the present Administration.

Hon. Mr. Rogers, in introducing his estimates said that two years ago the Public Works estimates amounted to approximately \$45,000,000, but in view of the need of more economy owing to the outbreak of war only about \$20,000,000 was actually spent. Last season the estimates were reduced to \$24,000,000, and of this only about \$19,000,000 had been spent. The estimates submitted today, Mr. Rogers went on, "amount to about \$27,000,000, or six or seven million dollars less than last year. I am glad to be able to say it is hoped that at least ten millions, perhaps a little more, it will not be necessary to spend over the last year's figures."

Dr. Pugsley compared the expenditure of the present Government on Public Works with that of the Laurier Government. In 1915-16 the expenditure of the Department of Public Works was \$19,940,000. By 1915-16 it had increased to \$19,944,232, or nearly double. The total for the year following was \$20,266,000, or nearly double and a half times as much as the last full year of Liberal Administration.

"The figures were getting into their stride," commented Dr. Clark, of Red Deer.

"Yes," Dr. Pugsley agreed. "The expenditure of the department during 1915-16, Dr. Pugsley continued, was \$22,832,000, or the greater part of that year the country was at war. "The Government," he declared, "would have the country believe that they were morally certain of a great European conflict in which Canada would be involved. If the Government honestly believed that, surely they must have anticipated that the financial resources of this country would be strained to the utmost and that economy was essential."

Dr. Pugsley asked further that the items which went to make up the ten millions which the Minister of Public Works had said would not be spent should be struck from the estimates. Mr. Rogers, in reply, urged that it was necessary that the items which were retained in the estimates, as they had been placed in the estimates in good faith, and in good faith he had announced, were the work would not be carried out unless financial conditions permitted. As shown by the figures already given, expenditure had been considerably below the amounts voted. Mr. Rogers argued that under Liberal administration it had been the practice to vote more than was necessary. In 1915-16 the estimate was six millions over the estimates and in 1915-16 it was ten millions over.

Dr. Pugsley then moved that a vote of \$27,000 for extensions and additions to the buildings in Ottawa and for the new Federal Building in Toronto, which Mr. Rogers practically admitted would not be spent, should be reduced to \$260,000. The Chairman declared the motion lost.

PLEADS FOR OPTIMISM.

Replying to the repeated demands from the Liberal members for the cutting out of some of the admittedly unnecessary votes and the further jarring down of expenditures, Mr. Rogers pleaded for optimism. He took a hopeful view of the post-war situation, predicted a big revival of business and a heavy immigration, which would mean sound money and the great construction of the public works which were now being temporarily postponed. He took a gloomy view of the future, still unemployed in the west, and of the tens of thousands of people who would come from the war-stricken Europe as soon as the war was over.

WILL TO BE ON SAFE SIDE.

Mr. E. M. Macdonald and Hon. Geo. F. Graham wanted the Minister, however, that it would be well to be too optimistic, and that the conclusion of the war might, as Sir George

ter pointed out, mean at first the necessity of still greater economies, with a closing of business unanticipated. "It is well to be on the safe side," remarked Mr. Graham. He pointed out that after the war with a school of thought that will think it probable that Canada will be in a position to give to intending immigrants from European countries devastated by the war the "indemnity" of a country free from others from which a large number of immigrants had been part of the British Empire. We must be careful not to be stampeded into a permanent military expenditure at the present time, so that the burden of taxation will not rest too heavily on us in the reconstruction period after the war."

On a vote for \$15,000 for a public building at Montreal, Mr. Graham suggested that in view of the present battle it would be appropriate to place in the building a tablet historically commemorating the present critical engagement. Mr. Rogers promised to favorably consider the idea.

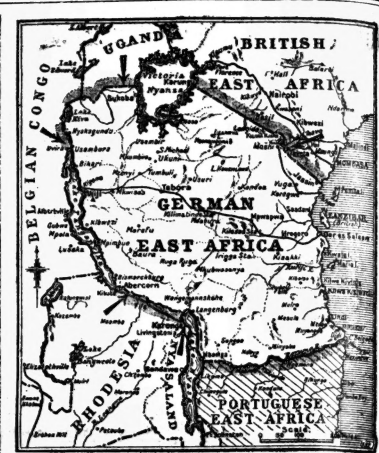
NO CRITICISM OF GENERAL PLANS. Mr. Graham asked if the committee of members to consider the plans for the restored Parliament Buildings had yet been appointed. Mr. Rogers replied that he had received from the Prime Minister the name of Senator Loughheed, Hon. Dr. Reid and Hon. Dr. McCreary. He hoped to receive from Sir Wilfrid Laurier shortly the names of members of the Opposition to sit on the committee. So far, Mr. Rogers added, there had been no criticism of the general plans as drafted by the architect. It would be for the committee to consider details.

Mr. Rogers said that as a prohibition law was being passed there would be no room for drink in the new building.

"We shall have a restaurant," Mr. Rogers replied; "beyond that, I have no recommendation to make."

COMPETENT CRITICS. Artists who have spent a lifetime in the study of music should be competent critics of the qualities of a piano and their word should be worth considering. When such famous artists as Tetzlaff, Ruffo, the Chervinskis, Celli Panning, Nordica and a host of others have pronounced the piano made by Ye Old Firm of Holmstrom & Co., Ltd., it certainly is a high compliment to the firm.

Geraldine Farrar is quoted as saying: "I have never heard of a better piano than the one I have. Most marriages are ending just one sort of boom—Indianapolis News."



Map of Germany's last colony, being rapidly conquered by General Smuts. The Portuguese declaration of war makes a ring around the South.

MANY UNFIT

They Put the Country to a Tremendous Expense.

The Chief Recruiting Officer is one official who appreciates the utter folly of passing men for overseas duty who are not physically fit. A number of men have not been fit to go to the front, or other, and, in the majority of cases, have developed into items of expense for the country.

While not generally known, perhaps, it comes about one thousand a year to keep a soldier, and when there are three or four hundred unfit men in as many battalions, as has been said there are, the staggering expenditure for which no returns whatever are coming might be realized.

It was estimated to-day that the Dominion Government is paying out close to one million dollars per year for the upkeep of soldiers who, on having been medically fit, in the line place, are unable to stand the gaff.

REDUCE BERNI BEEF PRICES. Berlin, April 12.—Regulations for the distribution of Berni's beef supply, which will shortly become effective, include a fixing of maximum prices ranging from 20 shillings a pound for some cuts, to 10 shillings a pound for others, a 10 per cent. from the present price.

GOLD AND SECURITIES CENTRAL BANK. London, April 12.—A Royal proclamation has been issued, extending the list of articles which hereafter will be treated as actual currency.

Included in the list are "gold, silver and paper money, and all negotiable instruments and realizable securities."

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